



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2003

No. 69

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

May 9, 2003.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL K. SIMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord, You are the lasting defense in battle and the guardian of Your people. Members of Congress have stood with the American people throughout the Iraqi conflict and now rejoice in seeing our military troops returning home. Bless and reward all those who proudly wear the uniforms of the Armed Forces of this Nation. Continue to protect those who are still in harm's way anywhere in the world. Strengthen their families in love and answer the prayers of their children. Bring healing to those who have been injured in military combat and grant eternal peace to those who have died. May their families persevere in faith and find compassion and support in their every need.

May the last 50 days now bear true and lasting results of goodness and peace.

Lord, may the celebration of Mother's Day this weekend celebrate the gift of life and renew the profound significance of family relationships, now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. MCNULTY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Montana (Mr. REHBERG) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. REHBERG led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain five 1-minute speeches per side.

RELEASE OF DR. SALAI TUN THAN

(Mr. BURNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce good news. Dr. Salai

Tun Than, University of Georgia graduate and a political prisoner of the Burmese government since December 2001, was released from his 7-year sentence this past Sunday. While many were instrumental in Dr. Tun Than's release, including the University of Georgia Student Government Association and the UGA chapter of Amnesty International, I would like to express my gratitude to Burmese Ambassador Linn Myaing for his assistance and willingness to meet with me to discuss Dr. Tun Than.

While I am grateful for Dr. Tun Than's release, I am concerned that his release was contingent upon conditions restricting his future political engagement, effectively denying him his freedom of speech. I hope that in the future, the Burmese Government will strive for more openness, freedom, and democracy in its political process.

Burma holds more than 1,000 prisoners like Dr. Tun Than in its prisons, many of whom have been there longer than Dr. Tun Than. This situation must change. I urge the Burmese Government not to stop with the release of Dr. Tun Than, but to release other political prisoners. Only then can democracy and individual liberty flourish in Burma.

REPUBLICAN ECONOMIC PLAN FAILS

(Ms. PELOSI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives has a historic decision to make. We can get the economy moving again with a fair, fast-acting, and fiscally sound Democratic plan; or we can pass a reckless plan that the Republicans are proposing that does not create jobs.

The debate today is about leadership. Sadly, that leadership is lacking from

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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President Bush and from the Republicans in Congress. In 2 years, President Bush and the Republicans in Congress have presided over the most dramatic deterioration in our Nation's economic health in our Nation's history. We have lost 563 jobs every working hour of every working day since President Bush became President. That is 2.7 million jobs.

That is why today is so tragic. We have an opportunity to create jobs and build a strong economy in a fiscally sound way. Instead, the reckless tax plan that the President has proposed has not only set a bad example; it has set in motion a feeding frenzy of onepmanship on tax cuts.

None of these tax cuts is affordable. None of them creates jobs, and they are not fair. All of them do damage to our long-term economic growth and contribute to the national deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject the Republican tax cut for millionaires that leaves working families out in the cold. Vote "no," reject the Republican proposal, reject their undermining of opportunity in our country. Unfortunately, we do not have an opportunity for Members to support the Democratic plan because the Republican leadership would not allow the free debate on the floor of this House of another proposal to promote economic growth to create jobs in a fiscally sound way.

H.R. 2 IS TAX RELIEF FOR EVERYONE

(Mr. REHBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know just exactly what are tax cuts for the rich? I hear it all of the time from critics of tax relief, so I looked into it and discovered that if we applied the sweeping logic of the antitax relief crowd, the term "rich people" would have to include everyone who makes more than \$5,000 a year. It turns out everyone is rich, because I am here to tell Members H.R. 2 is tax relief for everyone.

Our bill expands the 10 percent tax bracket beginning this year. Is that a tax cut for the rich? It increases the standard deduction for married couples filing joint returns beginning this year. Are all married couples rich? It provides \$1,000 child tax credit beginning this year. Do only rich people have children?

In fact, the House Jobs and Growth Tax Act will create an estimated 1.2 million jobs by the end of 2004. That translates into 2,700 jobs for Montanans this year, another 2,500 next year. It will also provide a tax break for small business and boost our struggling economy.

So let us get this straight. What they are calling tax cuts for the rich is going to bring us new jobs; relief for the poorest Americans; help for mar-

ried couples; help for small businesses, the backbone of our economy; an increase in the child credit; and an immediate jump-start to our economy. Call it what you like, it is good for Montana.

WHAT ARE REPUBLICANS AFRAID OF?

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, what are Republicans afraid of? Are they afraid of the anger of millions of unemployed when they find out Republicans are passing yet another massive tax cut to the already well-off, while unemployment benefits for hard-hit families are about to run out? Are Republicans afraid of middle-class workers who do not know whether we are going to have another waive of corporate downsizing in this country that will put their jobs, their health care, and their kids' educations at risk?

What is clear is that Republicans are afraid of something because they will not even allow Democrats to offer our alternative plan. Republicans do not want an open debate because they do not want the American middle class to see that they are borrowing hundreds of billions of dollars tomorrow for the tax cuts they pay today.

America cannot be red, white, and broke and meet its challenges both at home and abroad. It is time for the Republicans to realize that a tax cut is not the answer to every problem. For 2½ years it has not worked; ask the 2 million jobs that are now gone. It is time to stop squandering the future of American families and start doing something about this economic mess.

HONORING VERNA ZIEGENHAGEN DURING TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

(Mr. KLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of a truly inspirational individual. As we conclude Teacher Appreciation Week, I would like to pay tribute to Minnesota educator Verna Ziegenhagen, and the many dedicated teachers like her who have inspired each of us.

Who among us cannot look back and recall one teacher who made a difference in our lives? Verna Ziegenhagen has been that person for hundreds of Minnesota children. Throughout her 53 years as a teacher, Verna Ziegenhagen instructed and inspired the students of German Lake; Le Center; Heidelberg; Lexington; and Le Seuer, Minnesota.

Following her 53-year teaching career, Verna transplanted to her rural Le Center property a 100-plus-year-old country schoolhouse, which she filled

with the mementoes of her teaching career. What began as a personal journey to preserve the memories is now a museum of tribute to her former students and, by extension, a shrine to her own dedication and sacrifice.

Verna's dedication to teaching continues in spite of her retirement. For the past 16 years, this two-time Teacher of the Year has maintained and operated the museum, constantly changing the theme to reflect the seasons and capture the imagination of visitors. This is a wonderful teacher. We thank her.

REPUBLICANS FAIL TO TURN RECESSION AROUND

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, our Nation is in a job recession with 2.7 million jobs lost since President Bush took office, the worst jobs record in 40 years. For almost 3 years, the Republicans had the power to turn this recession around, and they have failed miserably.

For the past 2 years, the President and Republicans in Congress have repeatedly chosen tax breaks for the elite, and the American people are still waiting for one job to be created. Today Republicans are at it again with a bill on the floor that amounts to nothing more than a huge payback to the wealthiest Americans in our Nation, a payback that is disguised in the form of breaks on capital gains and stock dividends, two proposals economists conclude will not create jobs or growth in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when our economy needs a true jolt to reverse America's economic skepticism, the Republican proposal will not stimulate the economy. The Republican record on economic stimulus is uninspiring, and one that should not be extended today. We have had enough of it. Let us not continue down this road and this continued economic downturn.

NEW TAX BILL IS FOR CREATING JOBS

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, North Carolina unemployment is as bad as it is anywhere. Broyhill Industries just announced it is laying off 500 people from their furniture factory.

My little company has been operating wide open in North Carolina, lots of overtime, and that does not cost anything in additional expenditures and investment, but it reduces our efficiency.

The jobs part of the tax bill increasing depreciation writeoffs make it sensible to buy machinery and to cut down on overtime by creating four new jobs